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23 February 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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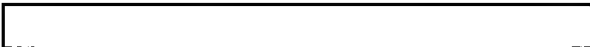


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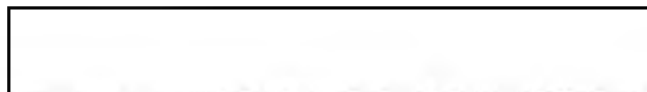
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: The tempo of military activity has increased significantly in the three northern provinces of I Corps during the past two days.

Early yesterday, an estimated battalion of Viet Cong attacked a Regional Force company about six miles northeast of the provincial capital of Quang Tri city. A government relief force established enemy contact, which was reported continuing last night. Preliminary government casualties are 20 killed or missing and seven wounded. Viet Cong losses are unknown.

Meanwhile, a Regional Force platoon several miles further north was virtually annihilated by another enemy battalion, losing 20 killed, 14 wounded, seven missing, and 20 weapons.

In Thua Thien Province, South Vietnamese troops operating several miles northwest of Hué for the past two days have encountered stiff opposition from possibly three or four Communist battalions. Government casualties thus far have been reported as 10 killed, 73 wounded, 71 missing, and 40 weapons lost. Viet Cong losses are 74 killed. Yesterday, B-52 Stratofortresses bombed the suspected nearby location of the headquarters of these and other enemy forces in the area.

In Quang Nam Province, two companies of Viet Cong early yesterday attacked government forces guarding a bridge near Hoi An. A South Vietnamese relief column subsequently engaged the enemy force throughout the day. Government losses were 10 killed,

46 wounded, 10 missing, and 14 weapons lost. US advisors at the scene counted 20 Viet Cong killed; the South Vietnamese reported 114 enemy dead.

Elsewhere, a South Vietnamese platoon on a resupply mission in Binh Thuan Province was ambushed by an estimated battalion of Viet Cong on 21 February. Government losses were 38 killed or missing, seven trucks destroyed, and an unknown number of weapons lost. South Vietnamese reinforcements and subsequent air strikes, however, resulted in 148 Viet Cong killed. Casualties to the government relief force totaled five killed and 11 wounded.

Yesterday the Viet Cong hit the US Military Command compound at Ca Mau in southernmost An Xuyen Province with an estimated 27 rounds of 81-mm. mortar fire, damaging radar and communications equipment. Two light aircraft and several buildings also received minor damage. One US airman was killed and another wounded.

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Indonesia: The cabinet reshuffle announced by Sukarno on 21 February appears to be a major defeat for the army and perhaps the definitive step in Sukarno's reassertion of his pre-eminent authority.

The army command seems unlikely to contest the President's removal of General Nasution as defense minister. Sukarno has also abolished Nasution's other post as chief of staff of the armed forces.

Nasution was regarded by all Indonesian elements as leader of the army's anti-Communist political campaign. Sukarno's removal of him is a bold stroke of showmanship and strategy designed to dramatize to the nation his ability to prevail over the army.

[redacted] Nasution plans to remain quietly in Bandung, West Java. He apparently continues to feel that in an open confrontation with Sukarno, the army would lose and that part of the army's strategy must be simply to wait for Sukarno's death.

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Nasution's successor as defense minister is Major General Sarbini, formerly territorial commander in Central Java and for the past year and a half minister for veterans and demobilization affairs. He will be assisted in his new post by Major General Mursjid, formerly the first deputy army commander. Both officers are anti-Communist and are regarded as "Nasution men." Army leaders may rationalize that by these appointments they retain reliable individuals in the defense department.

Sukarno has also succeeded in reorganizing the Supreme Operations Command (KOTI) which several months ago the army briefly tried to expand into a super cabinet and which it had continued to use as a channel for political action. Suharto and other service chiefs have now agreed to limit its mission to military operations against Malaysia.

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The move against Nasution is only one of a number of cabinet changes. The complexion of this cumbersome body, numbering about 100 ministers, is slightly more to the left. Several moderates have been dropped and a few leftists added and most of the pro- or crypto-Communists who already held posts remain undisturbed. Two of the three known Communists who held ministerial posts are now dead; the third has been dropped. Sukarno has announced that he will install the cabinet tomorrow.

*There are reports of demonstrations by both leftist and anti-Communist students in Djakarta. The violence included a brief attack by 300 leftists on the US Embassy early today and damage to an Indonesian Government building by anti-Communists. In the latter action two anti-Communist students were reported killed.

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*Syria: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

A dissident hard-line faction of the Baath Party backed by key military units seized power today in Damascus.

The coup was led by Major General Salah Jadid, former army chief-of-staff. Sporadic gunfire was reported in Damascus but there is no evidence as yet that the move has met with significant resistance. The military group has announced the arrest of Presidential Council Chairman Hafiz and the party's civilian leaders and proclaimed the formation of a new "provisional regional command" of the Baath Party.

Jadid and his military supporters had been deprived of most of their influence during the past three months. In December, Hafiz and the civilian leaders dissolved the Jadid-dominated Baath regional organization. Salah al-Din Bitar, a comparative moderate, was appointed to form a new government. The Jadidists' power was further dissipated last week when the regime purged the party's legislative body of its military members.

The extent of the new regime's military backing is still uncertain, and some countermove is possible. In any event, the Jadid clique will maintain Syria's basic anti-West orientation and "anti-imperialist" propaganda attacks will probably become even more virulent than in the past.

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Libya: [King Idris evidently has abandoned, at least for the time being, his plan to turn Libya into a republic.]

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[Rumors that the aging Idris was again considering a republican constitution have been spreading for the past week or two. Conservative Cyrenaican tribal leaders, who have traditionally formed the backbone of Libyan support for the monarchy and the royal family, have been reacting negatively. Pro-monarchical elements organized demonstrations in Cyrenaica early this week.]

[The King nevertheless retains his poor opinion of the present Crown Prince, his nephew, and it remains doubtful whether the King even now will take any significant steps toward assuring an undisputed succession.]

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[redacted]

Dominican Republic: The chiefs of the army and air force have given no indication that they will step down despite intense pressure put upon them to accept the President's latest offer of advisory positions on a general staff board.

Garcia Godoy is himself under pressure from those who led last week's general strike to exercise his authority over the military, and has told Ambassador Bunker that he hopes to announce a solution to the problem in a radio-television appearance scheduled for today. He admitted, however, that the position of the army chief has apparently hardened to the point where General Martinez Arana believes that with the full support of his troops he can successfully defy the President.]

[redacted] some leading Dominicans now believe that Garcia Godoy is not anxious to hold elections in June. They feel that he is consciously attempting to create a climate unfavorable to elections and then call for a referendum to prolong his provisional government. Garcia Godoy, however, has given no indication that he plans to stay in office past 30 June 1966.]

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[redacted]

[Hector Aristy and other former "constitutionalist" civilian leaders are continuing their efforts to organize a political party to be called the 24th of April Revolutionary Movement (MR-24 de Abril). [redacted]

[redacted]

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*Uganda: The unconstitutional seizure of power by radical Prime Minister Obote yesterday has inaugurated an era of political turmoil in Uganda and may have unleashed forces which he will be unable to control.

Ugandan special police acting on Obote's orders placed five moderate southern ministers under detention pending investigation of their activities. In assuming all government powers, Obote apparently acted in desperation after the cabinet's moderate majority forced him to agree last week to an impartial investigation of government corruption. Obote and three of his close associates, all radical northerners, are accused of receiving some \$300,000 in gold last year from the Congolese rebels in return for Ugandan Army support.

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The moderate ministers in conjunction with the parliamentary opposition had become increasingly aggressive in their efforts to curb Obote's radical tendencies, and Obote apparently decided that his political survival lay in militant action. To justify his move and to discredit his accusers Obote may charge the arrested ministers with plotting to overthrow the government and accepting foreign financial assistance.

Obote's move, if successful, would upset the delicate tribal balance that has given Uganda relatively stable, democratic government. It will be strongly opposed by the traditional southern leaders whose restraining influence Obote has long resented, but it remains to be seen what assets they can employ.

The well disciplined, apolitical special police are commanded by a northerner and appear to be following the prime minister's orders. The less effective army suffers from bad morale and questionable loyalties. Its moderate southern commander took precautions last week to secure most of the automatic weapons in the Kampala area, but it is unclear whether the troops that moved into the city last night were loyal to him or to the Obote faction.

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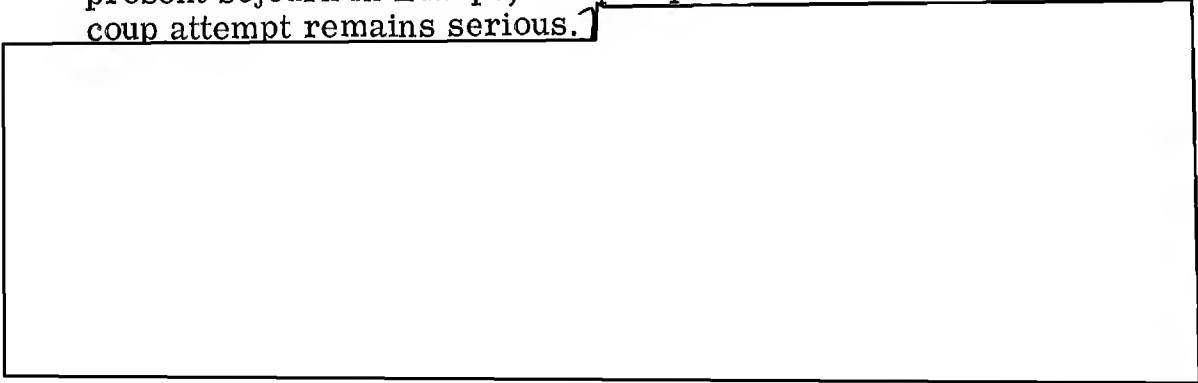
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Burundi: [Tutsi tribal conservatives and pro-Communist extremists are again increasing their pressure on the regime of King Mwambutsa. They may be uniting behind former premier Muhirwa who apparently hopes to make himself king or proclaim a republic with himself as president. As long as Mwambutsa continues his present sojourn in Europe, the prospect for a Tutsi coup attempt remains serious.]



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The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs

The Scientific Adviser to the President

The Director of the Budget

The Department of State

The Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Counselor and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council

The Director of Intelligence and Research

The Treasury Department

The Secretary of the Treasury

The Under Secretary of the Treasury

The Department of Defense

The Secretary of Defense

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of the Army

The Secretary of the Navy

The Secretary of the Air Force

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

The Chairman, The Joint Chiefs of Staff

Chief of Naval Operations, United States Navy

Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Chief of Staff, United States Army

Commandant, United States Marine Corps

U.S. Rep., Military Committee and Standing Group, NATO

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Commander in Chief, Pacific

Commander in Chief, Atlantic

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Director, The Joint Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Department of Justice

The Attorney General

The Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Director

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The Administrator

The Atomic Energy Commission

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